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THANKS to the exertions of its late excellent President (Prof. T. Bell) and his successor (Mr. G. Bentham), the Linnean Society appears quite restored to its pristine activity. In addition to the usual annual publication of the quarto 'Transactions' in the autumn of 1862, and the ordinary quarterly 'Journal,' it has lately issued another part of the 'Transactions,' in order to bring as quickly as possible to the knowledge of botanists the exceedingly valuable paper by Dr. Joseph D. Hooker "On *Welwitschia*, a new Genus of Gnetaceæ." This paper occupies the whole of the part, extends to 48 pages, and is illustrated by 14 plates. We think this proceeding in the highest degree creditable to the Society. When such a paper is brought before it, it does well to deviate from its usual course. The present essay has attracted the utmost attention from botanists. Probably nothing of equal botanical interest has appeared since the publication of Robert Brown's papers on *Rafflesia*, in the thirteenth and nineteenth volumes of the same 'Transactions.'

The first notice of *Welwitschia* was sent to Sir W. J. Hooker by Dr. Fred. Welwitsch, its discoverer, in a letter from Loanda in South Africa, dated Aug. 16, 1860, which was soon followed by the dispatch of specimens to Kew. This singular plant never possesses more than the same two leaves, although it seems to be very long-lived. These leaves appear to be the cotyledons, which, instead of fading, as is usual, and giving place to ordinary leaves, are permanent, and attain to a length of six feet and a breadth of two. They are hard and leathery, and in the course of time split into longitudinal strips. They spring from a groove situated between the crown and stock of the plant, and lie flat, or nearly so, upon the ground.

This is the only example of a "perennial flowering plant which at no period has other vegetative organs than those proper to the embryo itself, the main axis being represented by the radicle, which becomes a gigantic caulicle, and develops a root from its base and inflorescences from its plumular end, and the leaves being the two cotyledons in a very highly developed and specialized condition." The venation of the leaves is "parallel and free, like that of Monocotyledons in general appearance; but there is a total absence of lateral vascular communications between the bundles," as in many Coniferae.

Its male flowers are structurally hermaphrodite, but their naked ovule is always abortive. It seems therefore probable that the plant is truly diœcious. Dr. Hooker considers its female flowers as gymnospermous, but that the plant is rather intermediate in character between gymnospermous and angiospermous plants.

We feel sure that many of our botanical readers will hasten to peruse this remarkable essay, which is a permanent monument of the high attainments of its author, such as it seldom can fall to the lot of even a Hooker to obtain.